

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /111 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1614

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LOME PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 2391

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CG, FR, BE, US, UK, MO, SG, IV, GB, TO

SUBJECT: PARIS MEETING ON AFRICAN FORCES IN SHABA

REF: STATE 218255, LIBREVILLE 2349

1. WE DO NOT FAVOR A CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ALONG LINES
SUGGESTED PARA 3 STATE REFTEL, FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. TO CONSULT AFRICANS WITHOUT TELLING THEM WHY
SEEMS TO US TO RUN CONSIDERABLY GREATER RISK THAT WE HAVE
NOT BEEN CANDID WITH THEM THAN RISK OF BEING CRITICIZED
FOR COLLUSION. AT SUCH TIME AS WE DO MEET FORMALLY
WITH AFRICANS, THEY MOST LIKELY WOULD EXPECT THAT WE HAVE
IN FACT ALREADY MET, AND INDEED WOULD LIKELY FIND IT
CURIOUS IF WE HAD NOT. MOREOVER, DESPITE EVERYONE'S
DESIRE FOR SECRECY OF MEETING AMONG THE FIVE, IT SEEMS
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TO US TO BE EXPECTING TOO MUCH OT THINK THAT IT WILL
NOT BECOME KNOWN TO ONE OR MORE OF AFRICANS.

B. FOR MOST PART, QUESTION RAISED STATE 203722
AND 211443 CANNOT BE ANSWERED BY GABONESE, AND PERHAPS
NOT BY OTHER AFRICANS EXCEPT ZAIRIANS (GABONESE INFO FROM SHABA
IS VERY LIMTED). JUDGING FROM TELEGRAMS FROM OTHER POSTS, WE
ALREADY SEEM TO KNOW GOOD DEAL ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN TELL

US, SUCH AS COST ESTIMATES AND ROTATION/AUGMENTATION OF FORCES. TO POSE MOST OF OTHERS TO GABONESE WOULD BEG QUESTION OF WHY WE WERE ASKING AND MIGHT INDEED TREAD ON SENSITIVE GROUND IF IT WERE TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT WE HAD OUR OWN THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW LONG AN AFRICAN FORCE SHOULD SUPPORT AN AFRICAN COUNTRY. HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY HAS ALREADY MADE QUITE CLEAR AFRICAN CHARACTER OF PROBLEM. BONGO ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD AGREE.

C. THUS FAR, GABONESE HAVE ASKED US FOR NOTHING, AND WE DOUBT THEY HAVE ASKED FRENCH FOR ANYTHING EITHER. FROM THEIR OWN STANDPOINT THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT SEE NECESSITY FOR MEETING OR EVEN CONSULTATION SINCE (1) THEIR CONTINGENT IS SMALLEST OF LOT AND CAN BE RESUPPLIED BY THEMSELVES AND (2) THEY WILL TAKE THEIR CUE FROM MOBUTU AS TO WHEN TO LEAVE, NOT FROM US. NONETHELESS, IF EITHER OR BOTH CONSULTATION AND MEETING TAKE PLACE, GABONESE WILL WANT TO BE INCLUDED.

2. WHILE WE THINK NEED FOR CONSULTATION AND MEETING IS LESS PRESSING FROM GABONESE POINT OF VIEW THAN PERHPAS FROM THAT OF OTHER AFRICANS OR OURSELVES, IF SOME PROCEDURE IS TO TAKE PLACE, WE CONTINUE FAVOR ABIDJAN'S TWO-TIER APPROACH. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, FAVOR CONSULTATION EXCEPT IN CONTEXT OF TELLING GABONESE WHAT IS UP OR UNLESS THERE ARE SPECIFIC POINTS DEPARTMENT NEEDS TO KNOW THAT CAN BE ASKED IN COURSE OF NORMAL

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CONTACTS. NOR DO WE PARTICULARLY FAVOR IDEA THAT BRIEFINGS AFTER MEETING OF FIVE MAY OBIATE NEED FOR SECOND MEETING. AFRICANS WILL NOT ONLY WANT TO KNOW RESULTS OF FIRST MEETING, BUT WE THINK WILL ALSO WANT TO HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT AMONG THEMSELVES ONCE WHOLE SUBJECT BROACHED. TO DO OTHERWISE RUNS RISK OF RAISING UNNECESSARY SUSPICIONS OF FAVORING ONE AS OPPOSED TO ANOTHER. TIENKEN

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